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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to
establish an Office of Small Farms, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. STRICKLAND introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization
Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Small Farms,
and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Office of Small Farms
5 Establishment Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of the Department of
3 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6931
4 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

5 **“SEC. 229. OFFICE OF SMALL FARMS.**

6 “(a) DEFINITION OF SMALL FARM, RANCH, OR FOR-
7 EST OPERATION.—In this section, the term ‘small farm,
8 ranch, or forest operation’ means a farm, ranch, or forest
9 operation that—

10 “(1)(A) is less than 180 acres; or

11 “(B) meets another acreage-based definition of
12 ‘small’, as determined by the Secretary, that takes
13 into consideration—

14 “(i) the State or region in which the farm,
15 ranch, or forest operation is located;

16 “(ii) the production system of the farm,
17 ranch, or forest operation; or

18 “(iii) both; and

19 “(2) has annual gross cash farm income of less
20 than \$350,000.

21 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
23 lish within the farm production and conservation
24 mission area the Office of Small Farms.

25 “(2) DIRECTOR.—The Secretary shall appoint a
26 Director of the Office of Small Farms (referred to

1 in this section as the ‘Director’). A senior official
2 within the farm production and conservation mission
3 area may be appointed to serve as the Director.

4 “(c) DUTIES.—The Director shall—

5 “(1) coordinate efforts to improve support for
6 small farms, ranches, and forest operations across
7 all Department agencies and offices;

8 “(2) review Department programs and policies
9 and identify statutory, regulatory, and administra-
10 tive provisions, policies, and guidance that disadvan-
11 tage small farm, ranch, or forest operation participa-
12 tion, and recommend changes to ensure that those
13 programs and policies adequately serve small farms,
14 ranches, and forest operations;

15 “(3) develop recommendations for new initia-
16 tives, including financing mechanisms and technical
17 assistance opportunities, to specifically serve small
18 farms, ranches, and forest operations relating to
19 production, conservation, business planning, land ac-
20 cess, and other issues, as determined by the Sec-
21 retary;

22 “(4) make recommendations to Department
23 agencies and offices and other Federal agencies on
24 tracking small farm, ranch, or forest operation data,

1 including demographics and program participation
2 rates;

3 “(5) propose research agendas on topics that
4 are of special interest to small farms, ranches, and
5 forest operations;

6 “(6) provide or coordinate technical assistance
7 through the Department or through cooperative
8 agreements with other entities to operators of small
9 farms, ranches, and forest operations to enable those
10 operators to access the full complement of Depart-
11 ment grant, cost-share, and loan programs;

12 “(7) implement program directly or through co-
13 operative agreements with other entities to provide
14 grants of not more than \$25,000 to operators of
15 small farms, ranches, and forest operations for—

16 “(A) equipment and infrastructure repairs
17 and upgrades;

18 “(B) uninsured losses;

19 “(C) business planning and market devel-
20 opment assistance;

21 “(D) conservation practice adoption;

22 “(E) down payments for land acquisition;

23 and

24 “(F) such other purposes as the Secretary
25 determines to be appropriate;

1 “(8) operate a hotline through which operators
2 of small farms, ranches, and forest operations can
3 anonymously report problems that the operators en-
4 counter in attempts to access Department programs;
5 and

6 “(9) advise other Federal agencies on how to
7 effectively reach and serve small farms, ranches, and
8 forest operations.

9 “(d) LIAISONS.—The following officials shall appoint,
10 from among the officers and employees under the respec-
11 tive official, a liaison to the Office of Small Farms:

12 “(1) The Chief of the Natural Resources Con-
13 servation Service.

14 “(2) The Administrator of the Farm Service
15 Agency.

16 “(3) The Administrator of the Risk Manage-
17 ment Agency.

18 “(4) The Under Secretary of Agriculture for
19 Rural Development.

20 “(5) The Director of the National Institute of
21 Food and Agriculture.

22 “(6) The Administrator of the Agricultural
23 Marketing Service.

24 “(7) The Administrator of the National Agri-
25 cultural Statistics Service.

1 “(8) The Director of the Office of Partnerships
2 and Public Engagement.

3 “(9) The heads of such other agencies, advisory
4 groups, and offices as the Secretary determines to be
5 appropriate, including—

6 “(A) the Office of Urban Agriculture and
7 Innovative Production;

8 “(B) the Office of Partnerships and Public
9 Engagement; and

10 “(C) the Office of Tribal Relations.

11 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
12 are authorized to be appropriated—

13 “(1) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023
14 through 2028 for the administration of the Office of
15 Small Farms; and

16 “(2) \$10,000,000 for each fiscal year to provide
17 technical assistance and grants authorized by this
18 section.”.

19 (b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The Department of
20 Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 is amended by re-
21 designating the first section 225 (7 U.S.C. 6925) (relating
22 to the Food Access Liaison) as section 224A.

23 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 296(b) of
24 the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of

1 1994 (7 U.S.C. 7014(b)) is amended by adding at the end
2 the following:

3 “(11) The authority of the Secretary to carry
4 out section 229.”.